

The Crested Pigeon

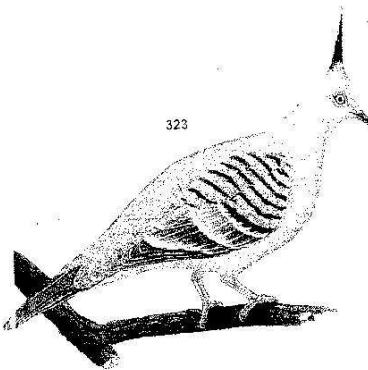
In the past twelve months Crested Pigeons (*Ocyphaps lophotes*) have been sighted moving along the Gardiners Creek corridor, and recently these superb birds have been reported in the Blackburn Creeklands. Crested Pigeons are stocky in appearance and have a conspicuous thin black crest. The majority of the plumage is grey-brown, becoming pinker on the underparts; the head is grey with a pinkish-red ring around the eye. The average size of an adult bird ranges from 30 - 35 cm. This species of bird is endemic to Australia, and is typically seen living in wooded grassland habitats with water nearby, as they need to drink every day. The birds diet typically consists of native and exotic seeds. Crested Pigeons usually forage in the morning and evening. Breeding can occur at any time of the year if the environmental conditions are favourable, but this usually occurs from September to March.

Be sure to keep an eye out for these special visitors next time you go for a relaxing walk along our magnificent Creeklands.

Reference: Crome, F. and Shields, J. 1992. Parrots & Pigeons of Australia. Angus, and Simpson and Day, 6th Ed 1999, Field Guide to the Birds of Australia. Penguin.

Clean Up Australia Day

On Sunday 7th March, an outstanding effort was made by many local residents participating in Clean Up Australia Day, in the Blackburn Creeklands. The day started at 10.00 am at Blacks Walk, where everyone met, signed up and was organised for the task ahead. As a result of so many people's efforts and care for their environment, the day was a great success. Over 20 bags of rubbish were collected and the Creeklands looked wonderfully clean. All involved must be congratulated on a remarkable effort and we hope to see you all back again next Clean Up Australia Day, or even sooner at the coming National Tree Day.



Melbourne Water Erosion Control Works

Representatives of Melbourne Water met recently with the Blackburn Creeklands Advisory Committee and Council Officers to discuss Melbourne Water's proposals for major erosion control works along the Creek between Blackburn Road and Pakenham Street. Although detailed plans have yet to be drawn up, the works are proposed to be carried out in a staged manner over the next two years. Sections of the creek where work will take place include the badly eroded section west of the Laurel Grove bridge. The Committee was pleased to hear that Melbourne Water is planning a follow-up revegetation program.

Blackburn Creeklands Meet with Council

We were delighted to welcome Councillor Jessie McCallum to a recent Committee meeting. She participated actively in a review of the Committee's activities both recent and anticipated, and made several good suggestions to help us fulfil our mandate to maintain and improve the character of our native bushland. Jessie emphasised that February/March is the critical time for us to talk to our Ward Councillors while the Council budget for the coming year is being considered.

We also welcomed Kendall Sinclair to one of our meetings. Kendall is the Team Leader for Whitehorse Parks, Planning and Recreation. She discussed a range of topics including possible capital works, but warned that all the bushland parks are competing for limited funds. Regular meetings and walk-throughs with Council Officers and Committee members were agreed to be fruitful, and will continue.

Blackburn Creeklands Advisory Committee

Annual General Meeting 8.00 pm Thursday 22 July

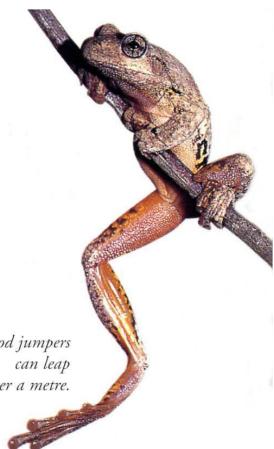
After a short meeting a guest speaker from the Wilderness Society will give a talk and power point presentation about the unique and spectacular old growth forest in the Tarkine area of Tasmania.

Furness Street Access

Construction of the Furness Street steps has now been postponed and Council will develop a new proposal in line with Melbourne Water's creek works.

Frog-friendly Gardens

Frogs need water but a frog-friendly garden does not have to be a wetland. Make use of a damp or boggy area in your garden to create a little wilderness. It will need to be protected from dogs, cats and lawnmowers! Provide some rocks or fallen timber where frogs can burrow to shelter from hot sun and from predators. Planting should include grass tussocks and moisture-loving plants. Indigenous plants (those that grow naturally in this area) will help to attract frogs. Frogs are very sensitive, so it is important to avoid the use of chemical sprays, insecticides and fertilisers in this part of the garden.



Of course you cannot go out and collect frogs for your garden. All Victorian frogs and tadpoles are protected by law. Your frog-friendly garden will serve as an invitation for frogs to visit.

As part of their Frog Census program, Melbourne Water will hold a training night at the Visitor Centre on Friday 13th August from 7-9pm (bookings essential). This will include a talk on frogs and a visit to the BLS wetland area to record frog calls. Further material on frogs is available through Blackburn Lake Sanctuary's community education program (phone Elaine on 9877 5896 or call in at the Visitor Centre 2-4pm Sundays) or from the Amphibian Research Centre.

Solar Lights

As most park users know the three lights near the Laurel Grove bridge in the Creeklands have not been working for some time. This will change very soon, as the lights are to be connected to mains electricity. The capacity of the lights to utilise solar energy will be restored once the repairs are finished and the panels re-aligned. Mains electricity should only be required for top up in the winter months.

Vale Neville Walters

Neville Walters, retired research mycologist and botanist with CSIRO and local identity, passed away in April this year. Friends of the Lake and many users of Blackburn Lake Sanctuary will remember Neville's renowned Fungi Walks, an institution in the BLS community education program. Neville's walks and talks were enriched by his comprehensive knowledge of fungi and enlivened by his fund of personal anecdotes representing a lifetime of botanical experience. He was an outstanding educator, a gentle and gracious man who will be sadly missed by many in the wider community and especially by his many friends at Blackburn Lake Sanctuary.

Thank You, Geoff Parker

Blackburn Lake Sanctuary Advisory Committee is indebted to local Blackburn identity Geoff Parker for his gift of botanical observations recorded at the Sanctuary over a 12 month period during 1986. With assistance from the City of Whitehorse, we have been able to preserve this material on CD ROM. It will form an invaluable resource in the BLS community education program. In the future the Advisory Committee hopes to undertake a similar survey, which will enable us to establish a bank of comparative data across a 20 year period. Geoff's generous gift was recognised with a special presentation at our recent Friends of the Lake luncheon.

EcoFootPrints

How much of our limited natural resources, water, coal, petroleum, minerals, agricultural land, do you use each year? Do you know that if every one in the world used the same level of resources as Victorians, we would need 3 worlds to cope with us all. Come and listen to Krista Milne from the EPA explain the ideas behind the EcoFootPrint. Then work out the resources you and your household uses each year. It's fascinating and scary.

Putting plants in their place

Paul Thompson, a renowned landscape architect, is coming to Blackburn Lake Sanctuary on 17 October. Paul has designed some wonderful gardens, mainly with Australian native plants which have been seen on Gardening Australia. He is currently working on an Australian garden as part of the Royal Botanic Garden at Cranbourne. Paul will talk about creating stunning gardens with local native plants, trees, and water features. These gardens help reduce water needs and the impact of plants which become weeds. Copies of his inspiring book will be available for sale. This will be a great afternoon, come and join us.

National Tree Day will be celebrated with a **Community Tree Planting**, 10.00 am - Noon, Sunday 25 July in Blacks Walk in the **Blackburn Creeklands** to be followed by a **Sausage Sizzle** for participants. Come and join in. Planting a tree, or bush, watching it grow over the months and years is rewarding, and a wonderful experience for children. Everyone is welcome. Bring a digging implement if you can. Meet near the Scout Hall in Pakenham Street (Melways Ref. 47 H11). Join with hundreds of thousands of people across Australia who are also planting trees.

Further details on all activities

Blackburn Creeklands	Blackburn Lake Sanctuary
Meetings: Field Naturalists Hall, 1 Gardenia Street, Blackburn, at 8.00pm on fourth Thursday in the month. All welcome	Meetings are held at the Visitor Centre at 8.00pm on the first Thursday in the month. Everyone is welcome to attend
All Enquiries - ring Sally on 9877 5445	All Enquiries ring the Visitor Centre and leave a message on 9877 9235

Kennedias or running postman will be in flower over the next few months. Enjoy their bright red flowers. Line drawings are reproduced with permission from Society for Australian Plants



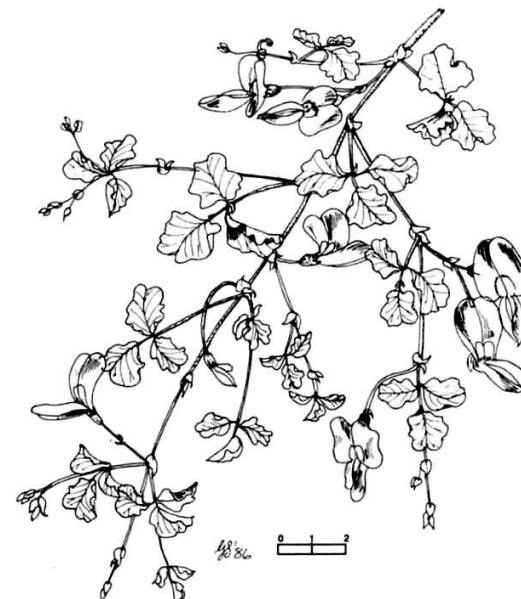
Blackburn Lake Sanctuary

and

Blackburn Creeklands



Newsletter Winter - Spring 2004



Kennedia prostrata

